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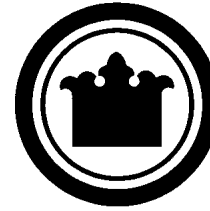
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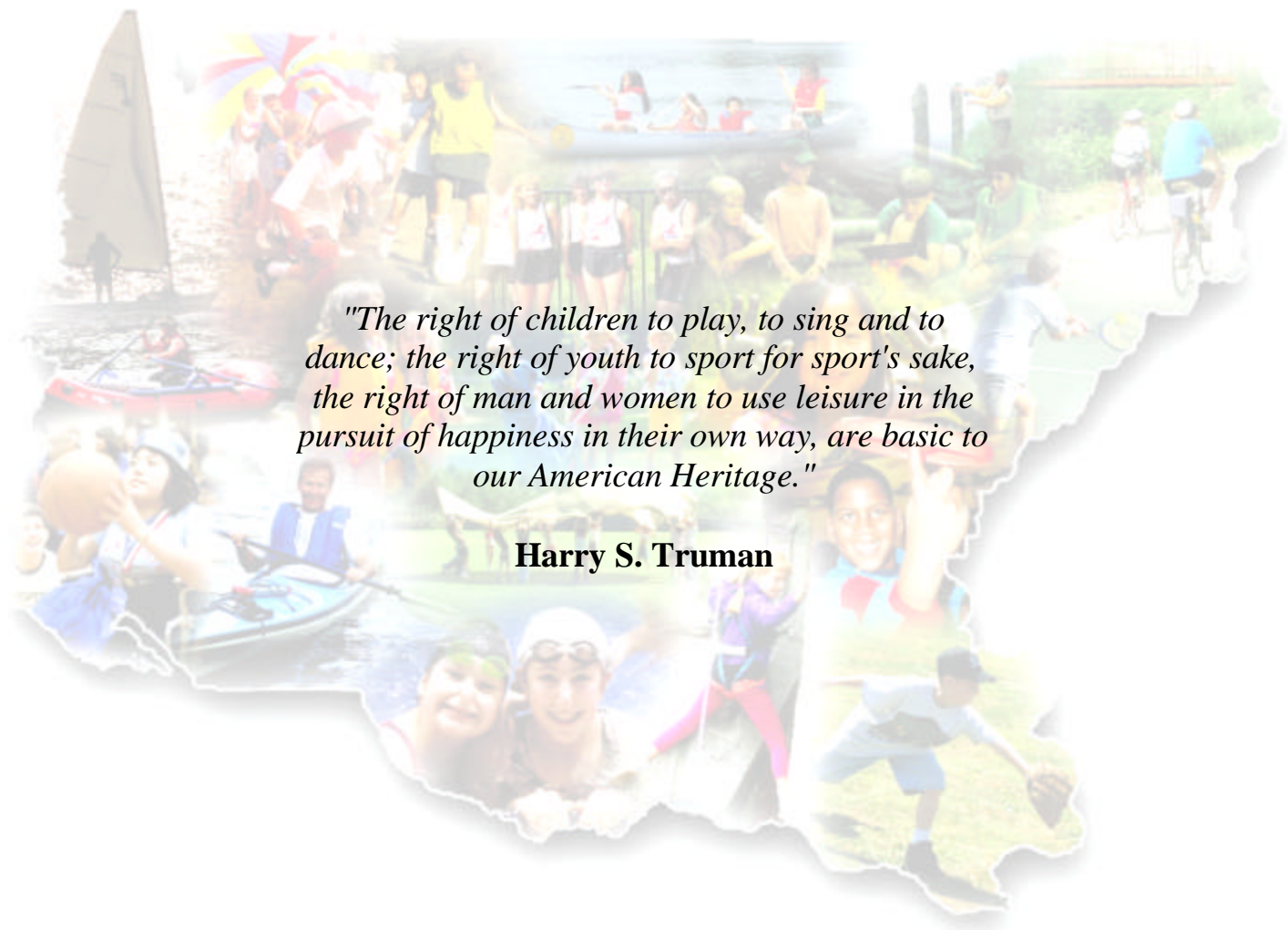
## King County Active Sports and Youth Recreation Commission

# State of the Region's Parks, Sports, and Recreation System

## What We Have, What We Need, And Policy Recommendations for A Regional Migration to a Parks, Sports, And Recreation Renaissance

### Excerpts:

- Table of Contents for "Living" Report
- Introduction and Commission Profiles
- "The ASpyRe Message"
- List of Recommendations
- Components of the "Living" Report
- Appendix C: Partnerships, Creativity, and the Renaissance



*"The right of children to play, to sing and to dance; the right of youth to sport for sport's sake, the right of man and women to use leisure in the pursuit of happiness in their own way, are basic to our American Heritage."*

**Harry S. Truman**



# State of the Region's Parks, Sports, and Recreation System

## What We Have, What We Need, And Policy Recommendations for A Regional Migration to a Parks, Sports, And Recreation Renaissance

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# 1. Introduction

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## **Commission Purpose and Profile**

The Active Sports and Youth Recreation Commission (“ASpYRe”) was created by ordinance in February 2000. It was established to develop a regional perspective for addressing the needs of active sports and youth recreation throughout King County. Its lead staff person was appointed in June 2000 and its inaugural meeting was on January 17th, 2001. The Commission, its sub-committees, work groups, and community partners continued monthly and bi-weekly meetings at parks departments, city halls, community centers, athletic associations, coffee houses, and at sports and recreation facilities in many parts of King County from January 2001 through June 2002.

### **The Commission represents the needs and interests of:**

- field sports and recreation
- aquatic sports and recreation
- open water sports and recreation
- gym sports and recreation
- club sports and recreation
- outdoor sports and recreation
- sky sports and recreation
- bicycle sports and recreation
- skate sports and recreation
- running sports and recreation
- ice sports and recreation
- snow sports and recreation
- hobby sports and recreation
- and any other sports and recreation activity which requires parks, facilities, fields, or programming.

### **It was established to create recommendations on:**

- ways to maintain and enhance inter-jurisdictional relations;
- ways to create ongoing partnerships with local parks and recreation departments, school districts and nonprofit groups to maximize use of recreation facilities;
- long range planning to anticipate demand for programs, facilities, and services;
- possible new properties and facilities to meet regional sports needs, and identify funding sources for the acquisition of those facilities;
- growth management policies which enhance recreational programs and/or facilities and;
- making improvements to existing facilities and exploring the use of public-private partnerships for maintenance of these facilities.



The Commission has nineteen voting members. Thirteen members are selected from their respective Council Districts and six members are at-large. Appointments were made to ensure the broadest representation of sports and recreation disciplines, as well as, different professional and community advocacy backgrounds. Additional non-voting ex-officio members include: the Director of the King County Department of Parks and Recreation, the Office of Regional Policy and Planning, a representative from a law enforcement agency, and a representative of King County Council's Natural Resources, Parks and Open Space Committee. The Commission also has liaisons from all pertinent jurisdictions, as well as, several technical liaisons from the maintenance and recreation programming fields. The Active Sports and Youth Recreation Commission represents over **500 collective years** of experience using, developing, enhancing, partnering with, and advocating for the region's parks, sports, and recreation system.

## **The 2001-2002 Active Sports and Youth Recreation Commission:**

### **Council District 1**

#### **Kristen Bush, Commissioner**

Kristen Bush is the Fields Director for the Seattle Rugby Football Club, but represents all non-traditional sports as a public servant on the ASpYRe Commission. Since age 5, Kristen has participated in a variety of sporting activities including horse showing, rodeo, fly-fishing, basketball, track and field, and soccer. However, her favorite sport, far and away, is rugby. Rugby features non-stop full contact action coupled with a rich traditional history that is revered throughout the world. It requires strength, agility, adaptability, stamina, common sense, and unwavering trust in your teammates, all characteristics that Kristen values both as a sports enthusiast and in general.

Kristen's personal goal as a Commissioner is to gather a complete understanding of the policy and history of park facilities and the relationships between other public entities such as city park departments and school districts, to identify problems and obstacles in providing facilities to both youth and adult user groups, and to ultimately assist in providing solutions and long-term plans to ensure that all parks users, especially those from areas with fewer resources, have a safe place to play their sport of choice.

Kristen is married to Stephen Bush, the nephew of Bill Bush, a notorious 1970's All Black rugby player from New Zealand. Stephen has played professional rugby in the US, and met Kristen through their participation in area club rugby. They married in 1992 and have three boys: Dana (age 6), Kauri (age 5), and Josiah (age 2). Kristen obtained a Master degree in Public Health from the University of Washington in 1997. She is currently a Health Science Specialist for the Center of Excellence in Substance Abuse Treatment and Education at the Veterans Administration Puget Sound Health Care System.

#### **Personal Statement:**

*"It is our responsibility as a society to allow children to develop their unique talents, regardless of the class to which they're born." - Plato*

*"Half of the harm that is done in this world is due to people who want to feel important. They do not mean to do harm, but the harm does not interest them. Or, they see it and justify it. Because they are absorbed in the endless struggle to think well of themselves." - The Psychiatrist in T.S. Elliot's "The Cocktail Party".*

*Face reality, Be candid, Forgive mistakes, Change before you have to.*

**Council District 2**

**Patti Petesch, Commissioner**

Commissioner Petesch brings over 30 years of sports and recreation experience to the Commission. She is the Citywide Programs Manager for Seattle Parks and Recreation which has responsibilities for the Seattle Tennis Center, Athletics, Field/Facility Scheduling, Youth, Teen, Senior Adult, and Disabled Programs. Patti participated competitively in skiing, volleyball, softball, tennis, swimming and gymnastics in school and early adulthood. These days she enjoys walking, skiing and swimming. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Pacific Northwest Ski Association, Boys and Girls Clubs of King County, the Central Area (Rotary) Boys and Girls Club, Seattle Public Schools Athletic Advisory Group, the Oversight Committee for Seattle School District's Athletic Field Development, and the Sand Point Magnuson Park Sports Fields and Wetlands Advisory Team. She is a certified National USA Track and Field Official and has officiated basketball, volleyball, and gymnastics as a younger adult. Through the years Patti has served as a youth coach for skiing, volleyball, basketball, soccer, and track and field. She is the past Director of Boeing Ski School and supervisor for Bellevue Ski School.

**Personal Statement:**

*I am honored to serve on the Commission with so many people I consider to have been my mentors in my career and be able to develop a vision for youth sports and recreation of the future. I have experienced participation in athletics as a coach, official, administrator and citizen board member and have a true understanding of how important participation in sports programs are for children, teens and adults. I truly believe the saying that 100 years from now no one will remember how much money I made, what my house was like, or what car I drove, What will matter is that I mattered in life of a child.*

**Council District 3**

**Geoff Clayton, Commissioner**

At an early age, Commissioner Clayton played soccer, skied and began a life-long commitment to wilderness activities. His professional involvement in recreation began by earning \$40 a week (and all he could eat!) building trails for the Appalachian Mountain Club in Maine and New Hampshire. During college he sailed with Manton Scott an All-American team that consistently contended for the top national ranking in sloop racing. Geoff moved west for graduate studies on glaciers and volcanoes at the University of Washington and has hiked to every cliff and creek in the William O. Douglas and Goat Rocks wilderness areas of the south central Cascade Range, Washington. Geoff has hiked and canoed through thousands of miles of wilderness and cumulatively has spent more than a year in solo explorations. Geoff firmly believes that exercise and out-of-doors recreation have tremendous value to the growth and health of young and old minds and bodies.

Geoff has been working with King County District 3 area youth recreation groups for more than 10 years trying to find land for a new park to help reduce a severe deficiency of playfields in north King County. Clayton believes that partnerships with the county and local jurisdictions have successfully relieved some of the costs of existing facilities in this area, but that overall deficiencies of facilities have still not been addressed. He hopes that by working with others who have similar problems, that land can be found and facilities can be built for new active parks. Geoff particularly believes that as a region, we need to build a park system that has enough playfields convenient for youth practice, because practice is what develops motor skills, conditioning, discipline, team spirit, pride, and excellence.

**Personal Statement:**

*More play areas and playfields are needed for youth to gain the healthful benefits of regular exercise and to fully enjoy the fun and camaraderie of a team activity, whether it is a game they invent, tag, or an organized sport.*

**Council District 4**

**Chuck Ayers, Commissioner**

Commissioner Ayers is the Director of the Cascade Bicycle Club - the largest bike club in the U.S. with nearly 5,000 members and a half dozen staff. The Club produces seven sporting events (e.g. The Seattle to Portland Bicycle Classic, The Seattle International Bicycle Expo, Chilly Hilly) to raise funds for their cycling programs which include children and youth safety and education. Before joining Cascade, Commissioner Ayers was on the University of Washington, School of Social Work faculty. At the UW, he conducted research focusing on the prevention of adolescent problem behavior, taught in the Masters Degree program, and worked with Master of Social Work students at the UW's interdisciplinary Adolescent Clinic. In 2000, Commissioner Ayers started bike racing. Previously he played baseball - including participating in the Greater Seattle Men's Over 30 League and traveling with an All Star team to Arizona for national competition - and soccer through college. He has worked for Outward Bound, the National Park Service, and as a river rafting guide and rock climbing instructor.

**Personal Statement:**

*"If we give our children nothing else, we should at least give them opportunities to participate, enjoy and succeed in pro-social oriented endeavors and to be recognized for their participation. Active sports are only one genre of activities in which such opportunities should be provided. However, for some, it may be a key to success and recognition in their community and, consequently, a key link to becoming productive adult citizens of our communities."*

**Council District 5**

**Cheryl Chow, Commissioner**

Commissioner Chow has dedicated her professional, civic and personal life to help kids and families. In her professional educator's 22-year career she has served as a teacher, principal of Garfield & Franklin High Schools, Madison & Sharples Middle Schools, McGilvra Elementary School and District Supervisor in the Seattle Public School system. On the state level she served as the Assistant Superintendent for the Office of Public Instruction. As a two term Seattle City Council member, Cheryl was the leader in building five new community centers: Bitterlake, Rainier, Delridge, Meadowbrook and Garfield. She also fought to bring a voice and action for low income families to approve: New Holly home and community development, and multi-activity plan at Sandpoint Park to provide for active and non-active areas and transitional family and teen mother housing. Cheryl's over 30 years of personal time has been and still is devoted to coaching youth basketball, and instructing the Seattle Chinese Community Girls Drill Team. She also serves as a board member of the following non-profit organizations: Girl Scouts Totem Council, First Place Homeless School, Washington State Dollars for Scholars, and Inter-Generational Innovations.

**Personal Statement:**

*"The children are not our future, we are our children's future and the decisions we make now will be our children's future."*

**Council District 6**

**Jerry Rerecich, Commissioner**

Commissioner Rerecich brings over 30 years of recreation experience to the Commission. Currently the Recreation Manager for the City of Renton, he has been instrumental in developing many of the youth and adult athletic programs enjoyed by the citizens of Renton. Born and raised in Seattle, Commissioner Rerecich started his Recreation career at the age of sixteen maintaining sports fields for the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department and played high school and college football. He serves on the Executive Board for Communities in Schools of Renton, he is a member of the Construction Advisory Committee of the Renton School District, and participates on the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Renton Teen Health Center. He has coached youth soccer and basketball in the Renton community for over 15 years and, in his spare time, plays on an adult soccer team and is very involved in off-road motorcycling.

**Personal Statement:**

*"The citizens of King County are very fortunate to have such an array of recreational activities and opportunities so close at hand. I encourage everyone to take the time to become an active participant in the recreational interest of your choice."*

**Council District 7**

**Jim Chavez, Commissioner**

Commissioner Chavez by profession has served his country for the past 31 years with the Department of Defense. He is currently the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) Program Quality Assurance Manager assigned to the Defense Contract Management Office at the Boeing Military Flight Center. He also serves as the elected volunteer position of Washington District 10 Administrator for Little League Baseball & Softball, which covers South King County and North Pierce County. He has held this position for the past 15 years and has been a loyal volunteer with Little League for the past 25 years. His concerns within King County are the lack of safe ball fields for our children to play on. He feels that there are many ball fields in King County that with a little work could be brought back to safe playing conditions. Commissioner Chavez believes that with the high cost of purchasing land and high construction costs for new ball fields, it makes more sense to form partnerships between the King County parks, local schools and the user organizations to improve/upgrade existing school fields at a much lower cost.

**Personal Statement:**

*"It is my goal within the next 8 years to have several safe ball fields upgraded for the children of King County to be able to enjoy our nation's past time; baseball and softball, these children are our future"*

**Council District 8**

**Phil Talmadge, Chairperson**

Phil Talmadge is a graduate of West Seattle High School as a National Merit scholar. He has a B.A. from Yale and a J.D. from the University of Washington. He served in the Washington State Senate from 1979 to 1995, and the Washington Supreme Court from 1995 to 2001. He is presently an attorney with Talmadge & Stockmeyer PLLC in Tukwila focusing on appellate practice. He has coached youth baseball, and he participates in adult baseball. His kids are active in baseball, soccer, softball, track and football.

**Personal statement:**

*I am hopeful the ASPYRE report will provide a positive vision for active sports in our region for the years ahead.*

**Council District 9**

**Vacant**

**Council District 10**

**Vacant**

**Council District 11**

**Sandy Elliot, Commissioner**

Commissioner Elliot is a parent of two daughters 20 years and 23 years old. Both Sandy and husband Ian were parent-partners with public schools and sports organizations during the girls' primary and secondary education years. As a member of the Kirkland Chamber of Commerce she and director Mario Morales created the Job & Career Fair of Lake Washington School District in partnership with local businesses and Lake Washington Vocational-Technical College. Today, Elliot is a water aerobics instructor of senior citizens. She is also Board member of Seattle's Community For Youth, a non-profit organization that supports a mentoring program at Seattle School District Cleveland, Sealth, and Rainier Beach High Schools.

**Personal Statement:**

*"A society cannot endure that is fragmented, separated by ignorance or intent. Generational differences can be the fuel for disintegration, or, the warp of the weaver's loom connecting our community; and securing knowledge of yesterday that leads to understanding, a criteria for action in the future. Parks and recreation are the opportunities to come together."*

**Council District 12**

**Reid Johnson, Commissioner**

Commissioner Johnson has been a King County Sheriff officer for 13 years and is actively involved in youth sports in the Maple Valley area and the Tahoma School District. He has been actively involved with field development and issues facing the South King County Junior Football Association, Maple Valley Pony Baseball, Maple Valley Soccer, Maple Valley Lacrosse, Tahoma School District, and other organizations in the South King County region. In addition to sportsfield shortages, he feels that there is also inadequate camping, hiking, bicycling, and playground opportunities. He is a strong supporter of community-based partnerships and believes such partnerships, empowered through grants and other resources, can address many of these shortages in South King County and throughout the region at large.

**Personal Statement:**

*We simply need to protect and expand recreation opportunities for our youth in this region, especially, ballfields and other outdoor recreation opportunities*

**Council District 13**

**Lori Hogan, Commissioner**

Commissioner Hogan has been an active participant, coach, and official in various recreation and athletic activities most of her life. She worked her way through the University of Washington as a camp counselor, playground leader, and sports official. Commissioner Hogan joined the recreation profession 22 years ago and is currently the Recreation and Cultural Services Superintendent for the City of Kent Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department. Her experience includes recreation program development and administration for all ages and abilities, facility use and development, athletics, aquatics, cultural arts programming, special events, tournaments and youth-at-risk. She has participated competitively in tennis, softball, volleyball, basketball and golf.

**Personal Statement:**

*"As a recreation professional and active participant, I see on a daily basis, the numerous ways in which recreation can benefit individuals, the community, the environment, and our economy; it is fundamental to our quality of life. We have an obligation to maintain and enhance recreation opportunities for today and tomorrow. I am hopeful that the ASPYRE Commission will be influential in making that happen."*

**At-large**

**Harold Fowler, Commissioner**

Commissioner Fowler is a local business owner, coach, beekeeper, construction technician, family man and fourth generation Washingtonian. Like many of us, for many, many years, he has actively participated in the recreational and athletic opportunities offered by our community. For the past 20 years, his participation has included coaching and organizing youth and adult sports such as soccer and, more recently, rowing. In fact, the past five years have included the opportunity to create an entirely new athletic venue. This rewarding project has involved working closely with King County and other parks departments to develop a new public/private partnership which has created the first rowing facility for East King County. Focusing on site stewardship, neighborhood relations, and program goals excellent model for future athletic facilities development.

**Personal statement:**

*"I believe that our best chance for creating additional first class community resources such as fields and other athletic facilities for kids and adults lies with effectuating partnerships between user groups and our public resources. Not only is that our best opportunity, but it is the most rewarding way to connect with, and create community and fellowship for all of us."*

At-large

**Bob Regan, Commissioner**

Commissioner Bob Regan is a graduate of the University of Washington with a major in Physical Education. He brings more than 50 years of experience, involvement, and participation in Youth Sports, primarily in Aquatic sports, to the Commission. He has served as the general chairman of Pacific Northwest Swimming, and was Chairman of the Pacific Northwest Association of the Amateur Athletic Union when the AAU was the national governing body for Olympic Sports. He has served on national and local committees of sports bodies involved in the various aquatic sports. Regan has been a competitor, a coach, a teacher and an administrator. He was in the private sector as one of the owners and the general manager of the Olympic Swim Schools, Swim Team Supply Company, and Community Pool Management Service. He taught physical education at the University of Washington and was a teacher in the Lake Washington School District. He recently retired as the Aquatic Section Chief in the King County Parks Department.

**Personal Statement:**

*"Let my people swim!"*

At-large

**Grant Richardson, Commissioner**

Commissioner Richardson is the Executive Director of Boundless Choice. He is passionate about providing more sports and recreation opportunities for people with disabilities, a population of individuals who do not receive the same opportunities as their peers. His goal, and that of Boundless Choice, is to create a community where people with disabilities and able-bodied people can enjoy unlimited recreational activities together, benefiting from the gifts, talents and experiences of each other.

**Personal Statement:**

*"The opportunity to be fully included in sports and recreation could be the most significant factor in a youth's personal development. What will be the loss to society if even one child fails to use all of his/her potential? We must create a situation where all youth have an equal opportunity to maximize their potential. If inclusion in sports and recreation will extend that opportunity to youths with disabilities then we must take the steps needed to afford them that chance."*

*"If you live to be a hundred, I want to live to be a hundred minus one day, so I never have to live without you."* -Winnie the Pooh

At-large

**Eric Smith, Commissioner**

Commissioner Smith is a Seattle Police officer who has spent many years as a youth sports and recreation advocate and recreation enthusiast. He has been involved in ongoing efforts to promote and expand, BMX and skateboarding facilities in this region and envisions the creation of a regional X-games park through public/private partnerships. His experience as a police officer has shown him the value of having a diverse collection of recreation opportunities in order to be certain there are enough options to entice all youth and their different interests. He believes that maintaining diverse sports and recreation opportunities is one of the best ways that our community can keep it's connection with today's youth.

**Personal Statement:**

*"Maintaining a diversity of recreation opportunities is crucial if we are to encourage youth participation. While we need more recreation facilities and opportunities across the board, we also must be certain that we have many types of recreation such as BMX, skateboarding, and emerging sports, in general."*

**At-large**

**Diane Taniguchi, Commissioner**

Commissioner Taniguchi has been involved with volleyball and women's sports as a player, a coach, a referee, and an advocate for 35 years. She is on the Executive Board of USA Volleyball, the national advisory board for the U.S. Women's Sports Foundation, the Seattle Parks Board, and is affiliated with the American Volleyball Coaches Association, and many other volleyball, women's sports, and community-related organizations. In addition to volleyball, she is very dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of women's sports and hopes to improve the region's commitment to our young women and youth, in general.

**Personal Statement:**

*Volleyball has been a part of my life for the past 35 years. It has been a sport available to me, a tall 4'10" player, and it has brought me many hours of enjoyment, satisfaction and new friends. My goals include the overall promotion of volleyball and the continuation and expansion of sports for girls and women, in general, as well as, the disabled.*

**At-large**

**Briana Pettigrew, Commissioner**

Briana Pettigrew is a sophomore at Shorewood High School in Shoreline. At 16 years old, she is heading into her second year on the school drill team. She was appointed to the Commission to provide the youth's perspective. She has worked with at-risk youth and sees sports and recreation opportunities as one of the most important alternatives that youth have for staying out of trouble. She is adamant about making sure that all youth have a place to participate in any sport desired, and one of her main concerns is ensuring that all youth have a way to get to a facility they would like to use.

**Personal Statement**

*"We aim above the mark to hit the mark." - Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." - Eleanor Roosevelt*

**Commission Coordinator**

**T.J. Davis, King County Parks and Recreation Division**

T.J. Davis was appointed to coordinate the Commission's efforts and shepherd the experience and knowledge of the Commission members into a regional vision and ultimately into the public policy arena. Coming from various Governor's Commissions in Oregon, where he worked on statewide disability issues and public gaming issues, his background and experience in large statewide policy decisions with diverse constituencies has bolstered the Commission's ability in developing sound public policy solutions to the challenges facing the region's parks, sports, and recreation system.

**Personal Statement:**

*I feel it is the Commission's destiny to lay out a new regional parks, sports, and recreation vision with the same wisdom and foresight as the framers of Forward Thrust."*



**Technical Liaison (Recreation)**

**Dee Ingram, Recreation Chief, King County Parks and Recreation Division**

Dee Ingram has been involved in organized sports in many ways. She has been a participant at the international level (member of the U.S. track and field team), collegiate level (varsity volleyball, basketball, track and field), and recreational level (slowpitch, volleyball, AAU and rec league basketball). She has coached youth and adult basketball, softball, and track and field. She was a women's high school basketball official and a former member of the local executive board. She held positions such as the Amateur Softball Association Youth Commissioner, member of the Seattle Metro Softball Association Executive Board, Tournament Director for the 1981 ASA National Women's 'A' Slowpitch Tournament, and executive committee member for the 1980 ISC World Men's Fastpitch Tournament in Tacoma, and sport official for various wheelchair athletic events. Dee also directly administered recreational programs, youth and/or adult leagues and tournaments in basketball, volleyball, slowpitch, and baseball and was a scheduler for county, city and school district athletic fields. Although much of her free time in recent years has been spent in the stands encouraging her son or daughter's sport teams, Dee still enjoys playing tennis, walking and swimming.

**Personal statement:**

*"I consider myself fortunate to live in an area where agencies, community groups and volunteers worked hard to put recreational facilities and programs in place for youth. As a person who benefited greatly from these opportunities, I want to ensure that what is place not only continues, but we provide for the diverse interests and increasing population of the future. Statistics and the community can tell us how we all benefit when our youth have a variety of safe, positive programs where they can explore their interests and develop their abilities."*

**Technical Liaison (Program Development and Landmangement)**

**Butch Lovelace, Youth Sports Facilities Grant Coordinator, King County Parks and Recreation Division**

Butch Lovelace, a Program Manager for the King County Park System is a liaison between the Commission and the Program Development and Land Management Section. One of his primary duties is to coordinate the Youth Sports Facility Grant Program. His duties with this program allows him to interact with many cities, community groups, schools, and youth sports leagues throughout King County, all trying to address the need for more or improved sports facilities. He is also involved with the Boys and Girls Clubs of King County. He has a long history of involvement in a wide variety of athletics and recreational activities that he credits to keeping him healthy, interested in personal development, and providing him with a positive outlook in life. Currently, his recreational interests have narrowed to fly fishing, golf, and mountain biking.

**Personal Statement:**

*"It is not by accident that the happiest people are those who make a conscious effort to live useful lives. Their happiness, of course, is not a shallow exhilaration where life is one continuos intoxicating party. Rather, their happiness is a deep sense of inner peace that comes when they believe their lives have meaning and that they are making a difference for good in the world." -Ernest Fitzgerald*

**Technical Liaison (Maintenance and Facilities)**

**Duane Jay Evans, Maintenance Specialist, King County Parks and Recreation Division**

Duane has 14 years work experience with the King County Parks Division, currently the Maintenance Supervisor for the Green River District that covers the Kent, Auburn, Federal Way, Des Moines and Renton unincorporated areas and has a staff of five fulltime employees. Although childless himself, has many nieces and nephews and friends with children who he supports in their various recreational programs, from dance to baseball. Himself a graduate of North Salem High School in Salem, Oregon and a three year letterman in Wrestling which he still enjoys today as a spectator. Served his country in the US Navy for 10 years prior to his Parks career. His favorite pastimes these days are biking, playing baseball with the neighborhood kids and is an enthusiastic gardener.

**Personal Statement**

*"If you build it, they will come" - Field of Dreams*



## **“The ASpYRe Message”: An Overview and Summary**

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The Active Sports and Youth Recreation Commission (“ASpYRe”) represents over **500 collective years** of experience using, developing, enhancing, partnering with, and advocating for the region’s parks, sports, and recreation system. It is this experience that was the driving force for an amazing series of informative discussions about the regional system’s past, present, and future, as well as its overall preservation, enhancement, and growth. As the Commission weighed dozens of recommendations, ideas, and possibilities, major themes began to rise to the surface that guided much of the Commission’s philosophy. These “messages” seemed to consistently weave into each policy issue that the Commission addressed; thus, in addition to the comprehensive list of 200+ specific recommendations, the Commission offers the following statements, collectively entitled, “The ASpYRe Message”.

### **1.1 A Regional Vision and a Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation Renaissance**

*The Commission’s message, its report, and its philosophy are all offered as a foundation for a new omni-jurisdictional regional vision...*

Our region has a complex collection of different parks, sports, and recreation systems. The systems are supported by various government jurisdictions, non-profit organizations, and other contributors and address various regional, local, and community-based needs. Each one has its own purpose, stakeholders, and vision. Many of the systems have similar challenges (operations and maintenance costs, supply and demand challenges, land availability, etc), yet they all are unique in their scope, approach, and creativity. The Commission believes that a new regional vision should not only be a platform for preserving, enhancing, and creating needed regional parks, sports, and recreation assets, but also a comprehensive regional philosophy where the ideas, successes, challenges, and visions of all jurisdictions, park users, sports groups, community partners, and our 1.7 million citizens, in general, are key components of a regional parks, sports, and recreation renaissance.

*It is time for the region to empower a regional parks, sports, and recreation renaissance and recapture the sparkle and civic pride that drove Forward Thrust...*

After creating a regional vision and a dramatic identity in the late 1960’s, King County leveraged a massive investment in its regional parks, sports, and recreation system that envied throughout the country. The assets we have from Forward Thrust investment are still very valuable today and we have managed over the years to expand the acreage of the park system and add a few marquee facilities to create a County park system with 180 parks stretching over 26,000 acres with 200 miles of trails, 157 ballfields, 16 pools, and many other components. The Commissioners watched slide shows and have personally observed throughout the nation, however, regions that have surpassed ours with incredible regional parks, sports, and recreation facilities that fully integrate entrepreneurial themes, economic development strategies, creative inter-jurisdictional partnerships, and progressive on-site revenue structures. Many of these regions have developed lucrative voter relationships that are based in regional civic trust and pride, not just basic need. The time has arrived for a new movement in this region. King County must recapture the sparkle of the Forward Thrust era or risk falling further behind in this forward migration or, even worse, risk the basic short term and long term health of the assets we do have.

***The voters would support a regional parks, sports, and recreation renaissance if it has a regional vision, regional identity, and a regional “wow factor” that is compatible and complimentary to the existing jurisdictions and community partners, while embracing progressive ways of doing business...***

King County is unable to empower a parks, sports, and recreation renaissance because it has not assumed a leadership role with an omni-jurisdictional regional vision for a truly regional parks, sports, and recreation system. It has not established substantive partnerships with the dozens of local jurisdictions and hundreds of other providers and stakeholders within the region's parks, sports, and recreation system. The public supports parks, sports, and recreation, but that support must be earned. Quite simply, the regional parks, sports, and recreation system is severely disconnected from its voters. A long history of an overall lack of user awareness, inter-jurisdictional disagreements, and no universal regional identity since Forward Thrust, has contributed to a voter ambiguity about the direction and purpose of the regional parks, sports, and recreation system and its connection to their local parks, sports, and recreation system. The region will not be able to evolve by simply maintaining the status quo, expressing desperation, or by direct or indirect interjurisdictional pressure and/or voter motivation through closures. Only after a new omni-jurisdictional regional vision is championed should the region pursue new voter-approved funding structures or other significant financing strategies.

***Protecting the regional parks, sports, and recreation system is a matter of public health...***

The scientific literature indicates that exercise in any form is the number one factor for increased longevity and improved health status. A plethora of peer reviewed articles have validated the theory that any form of exercise contributes to improved mental and physical health which is directly associated with decreased health care costs, and measurably improved quality of life. The current population trends indicate that over one fourth of the US population is overweight and therefore subject to long-term health consequences. In the State of Washington alone, the obesity rate has doubled in the last decade. Although there are several contributing factors to weight gain, the majority of weight loss programs include some form of physical activity. Other research has indicated that only one third of our children participate in mainstream sports such as soccer and baseball, so assorted facilities must be availed to the public to motivate them towards improved health through recreation. While the longstanding focus on open space and passive parks acquisition due to the risk of missed opportunities has merit, the region should also have a philosophy that recognizes and addresses the ongoing missed opportunities for public health through active recreation.

## **1.2 The Current Crisis**

***It is a mixed-use parks, sports, and recreation crisis, NOT a resource or preservation lands crisis...***

This region has enjoyed incredible successes in the public acquisition of preservation and resource lands. With dozens of public revenue sources, revenue, hundreds of large local, regional, and national grant programs, and multiple regional, state, and federal jurisdictions, non-profits all committed to the cause, we have had an uninterrupted acquisition strategy resulting in an impressive inventory of preservation and resource lands and open space. There has been a desperate battle, however, year in and year out, to barely fund the current service levels of the regional parks, sports, and recreation system. It is the playgrounds, sportsfields, pools, trails, beaches, picnic areas, dog parks, summer camps, youth swim lessons, and hundreds of other forms of recreation that are at immediate risk with many of them already being closed seasonally, some of them closing completely, and all them at risk for near-term mothballing. Preservation and resource lands are an important component of our quality of life, as is active sports and recreation, and both should be protected. The current crisis, however, primarily involves the basic preservation, enhancement, and growth of the mixed-use parks, sports, and recreation system and ultimately, the physical and social health of our children, our seniors, and the public at large. Resource and preservation lands, while crucially important and clearly a regional responsibility, should not be placed under the current funding crisis umbrella. Making this distinction is vital if we are to resolve the system's fundamental problems.

***It is a regional parks, sports, and recreation identity, role, and vision crisis NOT just a funding crisis...***

The current focus on “bite-size” funding and financing fixes to address the 100 year old CX revenue puzzle and its impact on parks, sports, and recreation funding does not address the lack of a regional parks, sports, and recreation identity, role, and vision that resonates with the public. The framers of Forward Thrust set out to develop such a vision and were rewarded handsomely by the voters. The region has not championed that kind of vision since. The current crisis is less about the diminishing availability of CX funds, and more about the lack of a regional identity, entrepreneurial components, system efficiency, creativity, and ultimately, the absence of a clear omni-jurisdictional vision over the years that could have otherwise leveraged the support of voters into successful bonds, levies, or other voter-approved revenue structures.

### **1.3 Regional Leadership Role**

***The County’s parks, sports, and recreation role should be as a regional leader that partners with, empowers, and invests in regional facilities with local jurisdictions, sports and recreation groups, and community organizations...***

There are 39 cities, 19 school districts, and other governments, as well as, hundreds of non-profits, sports organizations, and community groups all developing, operating, and managing thousands of parks, sports, and recreation facilities throughout the region. The regional disconnection between all of these valuable individual, localized efforts is a very serious problem. As King County continues to focus solely on its own system and not on an omni-jurisdictional leadership role and new partnerships, we are losing precious opportunities to initiate a parks, sports, and recreation renaissance. All the stakeholders in the system have the power, the resources, and the creativity to shepherd many of the regional components of a forward migration, but cannot be successful without a regional plan, regional philosophy, and a regional investment that is also compatible with their local visions and philosophies. The opportunity costs of not having this regional vision are so great that the County must begin taking steps immediately to improve its connection with existing jurisdictions and community partners so this regional role can emerge.

***The County must recognize and embrace the dozens of existing jurisdictions as equal partners in the quest to create a regional identity...***

As annexation continues to expand, the County’s role in virtually every function of government has been challenged philosophically and/or directly affected by revenue reductions due to the antiquated regional tax structure. Historically, the reaction to this change has been somewhat negative; fraught with inter-jurisdictional disagreements that often led to unproductive relationships between jurisdictions. Meanwhile, the public continues to want parks, sports, and recreation opportunities and often does not know and/or care who owns, operates, or maintains them. The County should recognize this trend and work towards a healthier platform where local jurisdictions are equal and willing partners in marquee components of a new regional parks, sports, and recreation system. The County should work with cities, for example, to identify future components of their local vision and plans that have regional implications and embrace joint projects that bring local and regional investments together.

## 1.4 Community Empowerment

***The community experience and ultimately the voter connection with the regional parks, sports, and recreation system must improve...***

Traditionally, the public's experience with parks, sports and recreation systems is based on a model where the government owns, operates, and maintains the system and "allows" the public to use it. This region must evolve to a model that embraces a sense of community ownership, citizen empowerment, and additional user investments that actively engages the user groups, sports organizations, and the public as equal partners in the system's success. The Commission believes that the traditional barriers facing this evolution, including labor agreements, risk management, exclusivity concerns, and the overall jurisdictional discomfort with relinquishing control are not insurmountable. The government's role should be to lead, coordinate, and empower this forward migration and only where it is appropriate, needed, and adequately funded, should it be the primary owner, operator, and caretaker of any given asset.

***Most new active sports and recreation facilities can be created through ADOPs...***

The Commission believes that Association Development and Operations Partnerships (ADOPs) are, by far, the most underutilized tool for creating **new** parks, sports, and recreation facilities. Sammamish Rowing Program, 60 Acres Soccer Complex, Marymoor Dogpark, and Northshore Little League Complex, are a few examples that we have in this region. Basically an ADOP is a public/private partnership where a significant portion of the development, operations, and maintenance of a public facility is carried out by a community-based organization directly connected to the primary use of the facility. The jurisdictional contribution usually comes in the form of land, facilities, grants, or other resources. For a site or facility to be ADOP-compatible, it usually needs to have a primary use, have a well-organized community partner bound to that primary use, and be public and/or have use patterns and programming that are similar to what the jurisdiction would otherwise offer at the site. Properly selected and carefully designed, ADOPs can address most of the potential drawbacks of public/private partnerships including exclusivity, poor stewardship, risk management, labor agreements, and other barriers. The region must recognize that new facilities can be created through ADOPs even as existing operations and maintenance funds continue to evaporate and that these partnerships are usually permanently immune to jurisdictional funding cycles. The Commission believes the Youth Sports Facilities Grant Program is a nearly flawless tool for empowering ADOPs and it should not only be preserved, but also expanded.

***The County must go beyond simply creating public/private partnerships, it must proactively empower the community groups, sports organizations, system stakeholders, and the public to become equal partners...***

ADOPs and other public/private partnerships are the new buzz in virtually all governmental funding and financing challenges. There is a difference; however, between simply partnering with compatible organizations and proactively developing and empowering partners themselves. We must view community partners as investments and provide the proper tools, knowledge, technical expertise, and any other resources required for them to be successful, equal, and long-term partners. In return, the system will receive boundless sweat equity, direct vested interest, and an unmatched passion for any given site or facility. This will create strong foundations for a long term assets that are usually immune from potential collapses of jurisdictional funding and financing infrastructures or other negative forces inherent in parks, sports, and recreation systems. The region simply cannot make a better investment.

## 1.5 Aquatics

***The aquatics system is regional, needs regional leadership, and needs a regional investment.***

King County's aquatics system is almost 40 years old. It consists of an aging collection of facilities strapped with expensive operations and maintenance costs and an overall shortage of water surface and water time that has not met the aquatic sports and recreation needs in this region for over a decade. Despite being predominantly located in incorporated areas, the aquatics system is clearly a regional function due to its overall costs, scope, user base, and public health significance to a region completely surrounded by waterways. Preserving the resilient Forward Thrust pool assets while also developing the new aquatics facilities that are needed, provides excellent opportunities for regional leadership through inter-jurisdictional partnerships, community empowerment, investments in efficiency technology, entrepreneurial creativity, and many of the other themes that embody this report. With these components implemented in a clear regional aquatics vision, it is the Commission's belief that the voters will provide the necessary support needed to preserve, enhance, and expand the region's aquatic system to meet the needs of today and the next decade. Most local jurisdictions will not be able to simply pick up the regional aquatic assets and attempts to localize the pools runs the risk of creating a disparate service delivery model where only the wealthiest cities will have aquatics programs.

## 1.6 The "True" Parks, Sports, and Recreation System

***The region must recognize and fully embrace the entire community parks, sports, and recreation system, not just its immediate assets.***

As the Commission began to determine the scope of its coverage, it became quickly apparent that a comprehensive approach was the only way a truly accurate picture of the region's parks, sports, and recreation system scope could be developed. This comprehensive approach led to the profiling of over 100 sports and recreation opportunities that use parks, fields, pools, lakes, gyms, courts, outdoors, sky, streets, trails, snow, ice, and dozens of other venues and assets. Just the simple awareness of these diverse opportunities' dramatically shifted the focus from a jurisdictional issue to a non-jurisdictional issue of impressive regional significance. From lawn bowling to mountainboarding, rugby to hang gliding, water polo to competitive badminton, BMX sports to kitesurfing, inline hockey to model airplanes, skateboarding to curling, basketball to kayaking and every thing in between this region is alive with recreation that goes way beyond any given jurisdiction. It clearly illustrates how crucial regional leadership is needed to preserve, enhance, and grow these opportunities in partnership with the local jurisdictions and the 4,000+ community partners that make these opportunities a reality for hundreds of thousands of citizens.

## 1.7 The Regional Priority

***Despite being a high voter priority, the County's CX contribution to parks, sports, and recreation represents only a little more than ½ percent of the County's total \$2.9 billion budget...***

Recognizing all of the funding source restrictions, "mandated" services pressure, annexations, economic downturns, personnel and inflation cost increases, and other County budgetary challenges, the Commission still believes there is a basic disparity between voter perceptions and expectations for parks, sports, and recreation, and its actual priority as a ratio of the County's overall budget. Over the last century, the County has maintained a distinct regional role in public transportation, criminal justice, natural resources and many other regional functions and has created the necessary funding structures to match. It is time to create a similar identity and funding structure for the regional parks, sports, and recreation system.





# List of Policy Recommendations

## Introduction

Throughout the chapters of the report, the Commission makes recommendations in essentially two categories: sports and recreation opportunities and regional policies and funding. Included in this excerpt, below, is a basic listing of the policy and funding recommendations on various topics that the Commission believed had regional significance. They are covered in more detail in Section 4, but are included in this preview since the specific recommendations are key to the Commission’s “message”.

For a comprehensive list of all recommendations, including the sports and recreation opportunity recommendations, see Appendix A or they can be found at the beginning of each chapter on any given topic

### 4.1.1 King County’s Role and Vision for a New Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation System

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>4.1.1(a) King County should dramatically narrow its role solely to being a provider, leader, and/or catalyst for truly regional parks (passive, mixed-use, and active), sports complexes, and other recreation facilities.....397</p> <p>4.1.1(b) King County should take immediate steps to divest itself of all small local parks and recreation facilities through the empowerment of local community groups and jurisdictions and/or the establishment of park service areas, districts, or other available tools to allow operations and maintenance of the sites at the local level. 397</p> <p>4.1.1(c) In addition to large regional parks, the redefined regional role should include active facilities that meet one or more of the following criteria: 1. More than 50% of the facility’s usage is by teams, associations, or other groups that are individually comprised of members or players from throughout the region (i.e. select teams, all stars, emerging sports and activities, etc.) 2. The facility serves a unique sport or activity that has none or very few other facilities in the entire region (i.e. Velodrome, Cricket, X-games park, regional indoor climbing center, etc.) 3. The facility has a specific collection of features that are not available at local or other facilities in the region and thereby draws mostly regional usage (indoor</p> | <p>sportsfields, most larger skate parks, etc.) 4. Contains features and infrastructure of such a significant scope, size, or number that it can host major regional and/or national tournaments or other events.....397</p> <p>4.1.1(d) Community empowerment and creative partnerships must be the cornerstone of all new and existing governance structures, policies, and funding strategies in order to build a long term, positive, and direct relationship between citizens and user groups, and their parks, sports, and recreation facilities.....397</p> <p>4.1.1(e) In the absence of any other available governance structure, the County’s regional parks, sports, and recreation function should reside in its own top-level, independent Department and/or maintain as direct of a voter relationship as possible.....397</p> <p>4.1.1(f) As an initial component of the transition to a more independent governance structure, the general government overhead should be removed from the parks budget.....397</p> <p>4.1.1(g) The parks, sports, and recreation system’s actual and perceived spending priority among other government functions, even during times of reductions, must remain at a proportionate level that reflects the expectations of the voters. Within the current discretionary CX environment, this should translate to a high priority, not the last priority.....397</p> |
|---|---|

4.1.1(h)	The Commission supports the general concept of a park, sports, and recreation system that has a direct relationship with voters and that the region's system should move towards a governance model that is more independent, however, the Commission does not support the MPD tool as it is currently available in state statute. 397		"maintenance endowments" or other similar tools as part of their upfront "capital" costs. This would <u>not include operations</u> , in general, and would be best used for ADOP-empowered sites.....405
4.1.1(i)	An MPD or other independent parks governance model should have a separately elected board.....397	4.1.2(d)	A significant portion of the REET funded acquisition should go to ADOP-compatible projects and other creative or otherwise entrepreneurial partnerships in order to reduce future operations and maintenance costs associated with REET-funded acquisitions. ....405
4.1.1(j)	An MPD or other independent parks governance model should have a clear regional focus. Most of its political, administrative, and financial priorities should be dedicated towards shepherding a regional vision for regional facilities through direct investments and/or by partnering with and empowering local jurisdictions, sports groups, community groups, and other stakeholders.....397	4.1.2(e)	The County should maintain accurate supplement/revenue ratios for active facilities and continue to ensure that user fee levels represent the most effective revenue balance. ....405
4.1.1(k)	The region should maintain a permanent community-based advisory body whose members are voting citizens with extensive knowledge of the regional parks, sports, and recreation system. This advisory body should provide an ongoing review of all acquisitions, policies, and other components of the regional system and offer specific recommendations that meet the canons of the new regional vision. ....398	4.1.2(f)	The expectation of premium user fees should be integrated into all new premium regional competitive level facilities at amounts, that, in conjunction with other on-site revenue, covers a significant portion of the premium facility's maintenance.....405
<b>4.1.2 Funding and Financing Tools in an Era of Reduced Jurisdictional Resources</b>		4.1.2(g)	ADOP's and similar inter-jurisdictional and/or community-based partnerships should be implemented for <u>all new</u> active sports and recreation facilities that are ADOP-compatible. Nearly all facility recommendations in Section 3 are ADOP compatible if ADOP partners can be identified and empowered.....405
4.1.2(a)	King County should continue to maintain some level of discretionary CX commitment to the regional parks, sports, and recreation system. ....405	4.1.2(h)	The region should implement mechanisms that allow for facility-specific bonds and loans for premium facilities financed on their independently verified, anticipated revenue streams.....405
4.1.2(b)	If King County moves the operations and maintenance of the parks, sports, and recreation system to a new revenue source, it should direct the CX funds otherwise committed to parks towards ADOPs, entrepreneurial infrastructures, and other innovative applications..405	4.1.2(i)	Using direct capital investments and partnerships with private businesses, non-profits, and other service providers, the region should aggressively pursue entrepreneurial infrastructures, services, and other on-site revenue at all parks, sports, and recreation sites and facilities. Infrastructures and services must be considered an "added-benefit" and not detract from the primary purpose of the facility.....405
4.1.2(c)	REET funds should continue to go towards capital acquisition, however, mechanisms should be established by which REET-funded projects can have site-specific	4.1.2(j)	As part of a larger entrepreneurial strategy, the region should aggressively pursue sponsorships and naming rights of <u>active sports and recreation facilities</u> , especially for new regional-caliber active sports facilities. The

region should protect the overall identity of large mixed-use parks, however, and only consider sponsorships and naming rights that are tasteful and that represent community-responsible organizations and businesses.

405

- 4.1.2(k) The County should preserve, enhance, and expand the Youth Sports Facilities Grant Program (YSFG). It should be dramatically expanded to include larger grants for regional-caliber facilities through ADOPs and other creative community-based or inter-jurisdictional partnerships. YSFG is the most efficient application of public dollars and represents all the values and benefits that the Commission embraces.....405
- 4.1.2(l) A regional park foundation should be established that compliments and embraces the regional vision. Its mission should be flexible enough to leverage support from a variety of areas, but focused on the canons of the new regional parks, sports, and recreation vision...406
- 4.1.2(m) The County should evaluate development impact mitigation set-asides (fee or land) to ensure that its application is yielding the highest public benefit and that they are being appropriately considered on a case by case basis. ....406
- 4.1.2(n) Neither the County, specifically, nor the region, generally, should pursue a regional bond, levy, or other voter-approved funding structure until a clear redefined regional role and omni-jurisdictional mission is adopted. 406
- 4.1.2(o) Any future regional bond, levy, or other voter-approved funding structure should embrace all the new ways of doing business depicted in this report and include a “wow factor” that sparks regional civic pride, as opposed to only attempting to meet a minimal level of basic need. ....406
- 4.1.2(p) The region’s parks, sports, and recreation system should continue to have a criminal and juvenile justice (CJ and JJ) component. Appropriately structured parks, sports, and recreation opportunities have clear prevention and intervention benefits. To fund such programming, new and creative CJ and JJ investments should be considered,

including funds from asset forfeitures, bench fines, etc. Funds already dedicated to parks, sports, and recreation for prevention and intervention purposes should be increased. ....406

#### **4.2.1 Separate but Equal: The Passive, Mixed Use, and Active Park Continuum**

- 4.2.1(a) The region must continue to have a robust continuum of separate, but equal, open space, passive, mixed-use, and active park assets.....415
- 4.2.1(b) The region needs more complexes that are solely dedicated to intense recreational use in order to reduce the active pressure on our mixed-use parks and open space system. ....415
- 4.2.1(c) Preservation and open space acquisition programs that displace active recreation needs or potential should have components that mitigate the displacement at other, more appropriate sites. Preservation programs will not be successful unless the active demands at those sites are removed.....415

#### **4.2.2 Parks and Farmlands: Better Partnerships for Increased Public Benefit**

- 4.2.2(a) Agricultural and parkland acquisitions need to be better coordinated in order to develop more mutually constructive partnerships and ultimately maximize long-term public benefit. To achieve this, the County should implement a formal joint review process regarding acquisitions that is independent of agency administrators and electeds.....417
- 4.2.2(b) Public investments in farmland activities that are extractive, harmful to soil resources, or applications that are otherwise not dependent on soil resources do not meet the spirit of farmland preservation and offer very little public benefit. The region should work with farmland advocates to reduce such uses in favor of more small-scale sustainable food production (local, organic,

- etc.) through increased partnerships and better integration between parks and farmlands.....417
- 4.2.2(c) Contrary to current policy, it is the Commission's belief that parks and small-scale sustainable agriculture are compatible.....417

### 4.2.3 Land Acquisition in an Era of Reduced Jurisdictional Resources

- 4.2.3(a) The region should establish a decision process, independent of parks administrators, that identifies and analyzes potential land acquisitions and makes recommendations that ensure the maximum public benefit. Preference should be given for land acquisitions that support ADOPs and other creative or entrepreneurial applications.....419
- 4.2.3(b) A balance between lands primarily for active use and lands primarily for preservation purposes should always be maintained. The region should recognize, however, that the REET funds currently available for parkland acquisition are essentially the only significant source of funds for active land acquisition, whereas there are many additional sources for preservation land acquisition.419
- 4.2.3(c) Land acquisition for regional sports and recreation facilities should not be solely focused on outlying and/or unincorporated areas. Acquisition opportunities in incorporated areas and/or commercial or industrial areas that have regional potential should also be pursued in conjunction with local jurisdictions.....419

### 4.3.1 Parks, Sports, and Recreation Facilities and Neighborhood Relations

- 4.3.1(a) Jurisdictions should continue to proactively and persistently include neighbors in the planning and development of new or improved sports fields and utilize all strategies and latest technologies for impact mitigation. Jurisdictions must ensure that all stakeholders are included and that the needs of the community at-large are appropriately weighed.....423

- 4.3.1(b) Jurisdictions should continue requiring all sports leagues, organizations, associations, and other user groups to have formal and enforceable "good neighbor" policies for their members.....423
- 4.3.1(c) Using inter-jurisdictional and/or community-based partnerships, the region should create more high capacity, centralized complexes in non-intrusive areas (industrial areas and other non-residential areas) and/or maximize existing complexes in non-residential areas in order to reduce the active sports pressure on neighborhood parks and facilities.....423

### 4.3.2 Accessible Parks, Sports, and Recreation: Developing Equal Choices and Full Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities in King County

- 4.3.2(a) The region should proactively develop more inclusive recreation by partnering with a single community-based organization whose sole purpose is to assist with the development of specific accessible recreation opportunities (training, equipment, etc.) and bridge those opportunities to people with disabilities in King County. 425
- 4.3.2(b) The region should support the development of an on-line centralized, community-based, and multi-jurisdictional resource in conjunction with the above partner(s) that depicts the existing and newly developed accessible recreation opportunities.....425

### 4.3.3 Parks, Sports, and Recreation as a Tool for Community-based Prevention and Intervention

- 4.3.3(a) While there is a need to increase the amount of opportunities across the spectrum, the region must also ensure the maximum variety of opportunities within the parks, sports, and recreation system. The diversity of sports and recreation opportunities, especially non-traditional activities, emerging sports, etc is a key factor in reaching all the region's youth and ultimately

contributes to the system's effectiveness as a prevention and intervention tool. ....427

- 4.3.3(b) A parks, sports, and recreation system does not inherently have delinquency and drug use prevention and intervention qualities. To enhance the probability of such benefits occurring, prevention and intervention science should be integrated into all aspects of the program design. Programs should focus on reducing or mitigating risk factors that increase the likelihood of youth engaging in antisocial behavior, as well as, enhancing protective factors and community and youth assets that reduce the chance of such engagement. Programs should draw from the scientific literature of best practices. ....427

#### **4.4.1 The Regional Aquatics System: The Past, Present, and Future of the Forward Thrust Pools**

- 4.4.1(a) Establish a Regional Aquatics Task Force to: 1. Negotiate the preservation of King County's school-sited forward thrust pools with the respective school districts, local jurisdictions, sports associations, community groups, and other stakeholders. 2. Design a new regional aquatics vision and make infrastructure and programming proposals that will address existing and future aquatics needs. 3. Develop new detailed strategies for funding and financing of aquatics facilities using entrepreneurial tools and innovative cost controls. 431
- 4.4.1(b) Using inter-jurisdictional and/or community-based partnerships, create at least two 50-meter facilities with diving boards, one in the East part of King County, one in the North. ....431
- 4.4.1(c) Explore and implement modern heat exchange technologies and other capital investments that will reduce long term maintenance and operations costs at new and existing pool facilities. ....431
- 4.4.1(d) Apply equal standards of revenue expectations and subsidization ratios for new and existing aquatic

facilities as that of all other sites or facilities in the regional parks, sports, and recreation system. ....431

#### **4.4.2 Athletic Field Surfaces in the Central Puget Sound Region**

- 4.4.2(a) To dramatically reduce the overall operations and maintenance costs, increase the capacity, and reduce the environmental impact of the region's athletic fields, and, ultimately, reduce the need for more land, the region must invest in more infill (rubber and sand) synthetic surfaces where the location and usage requirements are appropriate. ....433
- 4.4.2(b) When considering an infill synthetic surface, the following factors should be considered: 1. Volume, demand, and types of anticipated use 2. Existing topography 3. Existing infrastructure (restrooms, parking, etc.) 4. Community support and potential impact 5. Quality, playability, and durability of various synthetic surface options. Not all are well designed. ....433
- 4.4.2(c) Infill synthetic surfaces are not a luxury reserved for the collegiate or professional level. Considering our region's climate, they are a sound investment of public recreation funds, suitable for all levels of play. ....433
- 4.4.2(d) Infill synthetic surfaces must be lighted for maximum usage and efficiency. ....433
- 4.4.2(e) To reduce injury, convert existing Astroturf™ and similar surfaces to infill surfaces. ....433
- 4.4.2(f) Existing grass fields should be used more responsibly and cost-effectively by: 1. Increasing shared maintenance agreements and volunteer labor 2. Implementing responsible scheduling practices that limit over-use 3. Defining a clear separation of athletic fields from open grassy areas used to host festivals or event parking. 4. Reviewing technological advances in grass seeds and planting options .....433

### 4.4.3 Risk Management and the Recreational Immunity Act

- 4.4.3(a) Liability and risk management issues present recurring and often unreasonable barriers to creative partnerships and programming between public, private, and community-based organizations. The region should support a multi-jurisdictional resource with risk management expertise that actively represents the interests of community-based partnerships by negotiating risk management issues on behalf of those partnerships with the liability stakeholders of any given project or program. ....443

- 4.4.4(c) Jurisdictions should better incorporate existing jurisdictional transportation resources (shuttles, vans, buses, etc.) into community sports and recreation programs.....445

- 4.4.4(d) The region should partner with community-based organizations and jurisdictions to support inter-jurisdictional transportation solutions that connect users with facilities that are not otherwise available in any given area. (i.e. skatepark shuttles, etc.) .....445

### 4.4.4 Transportation in a New Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation System

- 4.4.4(a) The region should take proactive steps to integrate permanent youth transportation solutions into the design and programming of all parks, sports, and recreation opportunities, including but not limited to existing jurisdictional transportation resources (buses, shuttles, vans, etc). ....445
- 4.4.4(b) The regional parks, sports, and recreation system should work with Metro to identify and take proactive steps to develop well-promoted and easy to use public transportation routes, using creatively identified buses and/or shuttles that directly and permanently connect the region's marquee parks, sports, and recreation sites and opportunities.....445



# The Components of the “Living” Report

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## Introduction

This report in its entirety is intended to be a living document. The Commission realized that the overall picture of the regional parks, sports, and recreation system’s current stakeholders, shortages, and needs is better represented by an evolving document where a permanent connection with its contributors and authors is a key component of the new regional vision. Listening to and documenting the issues concerning a specific sports governing body or a particular local jurisdiction on a regular basis is a fundamental link that is missing from regional leadership. With 100 sports, 60 jurisdictions, and many other stakeholders, this documentation begins to paint a very big picture with many strokes and colors. The picture’s message is very simple, however; there is ample opportunity and a tremendous need for regional leadership that transcends jurisdictional boundaries and empowers sports and recreation groups, community, and local jurisdictions to embrace a regional parks, sports, and recreation renaissance. This report is intended to serve as the framework for maintaining this information and in addition to this introduction (Section 1), essentially contains three major components:

- **Sports and Recreation Profiling Chapters**
- **Jurisdictional Profiling Chapters**
- **Policy Chapters**

In conjunction to the report, the Commission has initiated two projects that are key to the new regional vision:

- **Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation Community Partners Directory**
- **Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation Facility Mapping and Inventory System**

## Section 2: Sports and Recreation Opportunity Profiling Chapters

The report covers approximately 100 sport and recreation opportunities that exist in King County. These chapters cover the history of the sport, in general, how it exists in King County, the

challenges facing the opportunities, and resources for more information regarding the sport and/or its local organizations.

The Commission identified and met with or otherwise reached out to local governing bodies and other representatives of each sport to hear their concerns and ideas about preserving their sports in the region and to provide input and/or to serve as authors for their respective chapters.

## Section 3: Jurisdictional Profiling Chapters

The Commission believes a crucial component of a regional vision is its relationship with existing local jurisdictions. To better understand the importance of the local jurisdiction and their potential as partners in a new regional parks, sports, and recreation renaissance, the Commission has chosen to profile each jurisdiction’s demographics statistics, history, innovative parks, sports, and recreation projects, and their challenges, both internal and as a partner in a regional system. Jurisdictions were invited to submit comments on their parks, sports, and recreation system’s overall status, successes, and challenges.

## Section 4: Policy Recommendation Chapters

Section 4 is where additional narrative regarding the policy recommendations can be found. There are 12 chapters contained in 4 subsections covering the following topics:

- King County’s Role and Vision for a New Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation System
- Funding and Financing Tools in an Era of Reduced Jurisdictional Resources
- Separate but Equal: The Passive, Mixed Use, and Active Park Continuum
- Parks and Farmlands: Better Partnerships for Increased Public Benefits
- Land Acquisition in an Era of Reduced Jurisdictional Resources
- Parks, Sports, and Recreation Facilities and Neighborhood Relations
- Accessible Parks, Sports, and Recreation: Developing Equal Choices and Full Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities

- Parks, Sports, and Recreation as a Tool for Community-based Prevention and Intervention
- The Regional Aquatics System: The Past, Present, and Future of the Forward Thrust Pools
- Athletic Field Surfaces in the Central Puget Sound Region
- Risk Management and the Recreational Immunity Act
- Transportation in a New Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation System

The recommendations regarding these topics can be found at the beginning of each chapter, as well as, the list included in this introduction. For a complete list of recommendations, including those pertaining sports and recreation opportunities and needs please see Appendix A.

### **Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation Community Partners Directory**

In addition to this report, the Commission has compiled a directory of parks, sports, and recreation community partners which contains parks jurisdictions, schools, non-profits, sports groups, businesses, and many other individuals and organizations that are connected to parks, sports, recreation, and/or youth, in general. There are currently over 4,200 organizations in the directory. The directory will require constant updating and the Commission feels maintaining such a directory and actively communicating with its members is an important component of a new regional vision and the system's connection with the voters.

### **Regional Parks, Sports, and Recreation Facility Mapping and Inventory System**

The Commission also initiated a mapping and inventory project in order to accurately identify and study every parks, sports, and recreation facility in the region. The Commission has identified and mapped over 2000 sites in King County that have some kind of recreation amenities. Completing the identification of these sites' features and mapping them will provide an important public resource, as well as, a crucial tool for the region to use in determining the location and attributes needed for new regional facilities. This process is not complete and will require additional County mapping resources and additional staff time to complete the inventory.